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CLAIMS

1. A method of collaboration between a plurality of associated portlets in a portal server comprising:

associating each portlet with a portlet descriptor describing a context name;

forming collaboration groups of portlets having corresponding context names, a collaboration group being a subgroup of the group of portlets in a portlet application.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein said context names define context values; each said group of portlets including a master portlet and at least one slave portlet.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein each said group of portlets share context names in common.

4. The method of claim 3 including communicating changes in context values of a master portlet to slave portlets of said master portlet.

5. The method of claim 4 including changing context values of said slave portlets to match context values of said master portlet as communicated.

6. A method of hosting a plurality of associated portlets accessible by a user in a web portal having portlet refresh capability, wherein said portlets have portlet descriptors, comprising:

managing said plurality of associated portlets in a portlet application;

assigning a priority description to each portlet using its portlet descriptor; and,

refreshing said portlets in order of their refresh priorities.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein said groups of associated portlets comprise collaboration groups of portlets;

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each said group of portlets comprising a master portlet and at least one slave portlet.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein each master portlet has a higher priority than a corresponding slave portlet.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein said collaborative groups are assigned different priorities.

10. The method of claim 9 wherein said collaborative groups of portlets are refreshed in order of their priorities.

11. The method of claim 9 wherein refreshing occurs first by group priority order and then by portlet priority order within each group.

12. A portlet application capable of operating on a portal server for hosting multiple associated portlets in a web portal accessible by a user, said portal server having portlet refresh capability, comprising:

said associated portlets comprising collaboration groups of portlets;

portlet application means for managing said multiple associated portlets;

each associated portlet having a portlet descriptor;

each portlet descriptor including a refresh priority description for said portlet, and a refresh description priority for the group of portlets of which said portlet is a member;

each said group of portlets include a master portlet and at least one slave portlet;

means in said portlet application means for refreshing said portlets in order of their priorities means in said portlet application means for refreshing said collaborative groups of portlets in order of their group refresh priorities.

13. A portlet application capable of operating on a portal server for hosting multiple associated portlets in a web portal accessible by a user,

said portal server providing messaging means for allowing said associated portlets to message each other, comprising:

portlet application means for managing said multiple associated portlets;

each associated portlet having a portlet descriptor describing context names;

said associated portlets comprising collaboration groups of portlets having corresponding context names defining context values;

each said group of portlets comprising a master portlet and at least one slave portlet;

wherein each said group of portlets share context names in common;

means in said portal server for broadcasting communicating changes in context values of a master portlet to slave portlets of said master portlet;

means in said portal server for changing context values of said slave portlets to match context values of said master portlet as broadcast.

14. A portlet application capable of operating on a portal server for hosting multiple associated portlets in a web portal accessible by a user, said portal server having portlet refresh capability, comprising:

portlet application means for managing said multiple associated portlets;

each associated portlet having a portlet descriptor;

each portlet descriptor including refresh priority description for said portlet;

said associated portlets comprising collaboration groups of portlets;

each said group of portlets comprising a master portlet and at least one slave portlet;

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means in said portlet application means for refreshing said portlets in order of their refresh priorities.

15. A portlet application capable of operating on a portal server for hosting multiple associated portlets in a web portal accessible by a user, said portal server having portlet refresh capability, comprising:

said associated portlets comprising collaboration groups of portlets;

portlet application means for managing said multiple associated portlets;

each associated portlet having a portlet descriptor;

each portlet descriptor including a refresh priority description for said portlet, and a refresh description priority for the group of portlets of which said portlet is a member;

each said group of portlets comprising a master portlet and at least one slave portlet;

means in said portlet application means for refreshing said portlets in order of their priorities means in said portlet application means for refreshing said collaborative groups of portlets in order of their group refresh priorities.

16. The portlet application of claim 12 or claim 14 wherein said master portlets have higher priorities than slave portlets.

17. The portlet application of claim 12 or claim 14 wherein said portlet application refreshes said groups first in group priority order and then refreshes within each group in priority order.

18. An article comprising:

a computer readable signal bearing medium;

computer program code means recorded on said medium adapted to perform the method of any of claims 1 to 11.

19. An article comprising:

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a computer readable signal bearing medium;

computer program code means recorded on said medium adapted to implement the portlet application of any of claims 12 to 17.

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